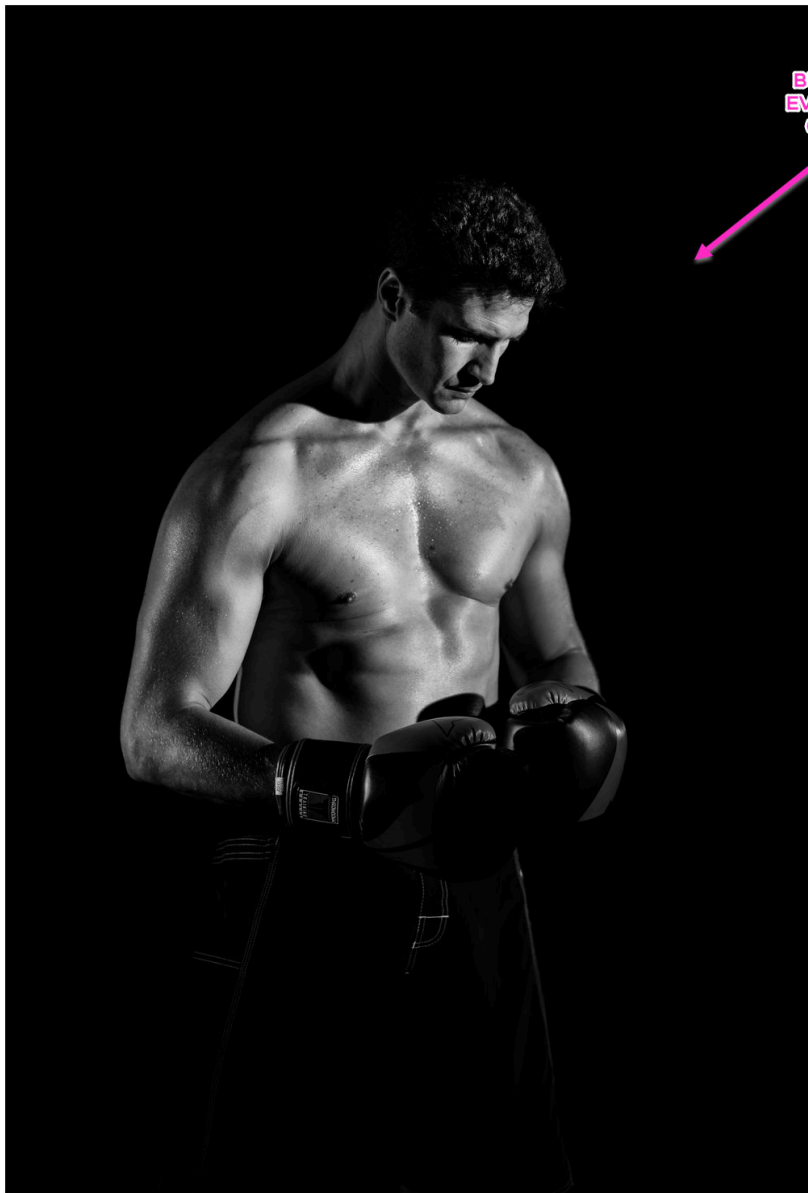


# Fear Is A Friend Of Exceptional People



*"I believe a man is a professional when he can do what needs to be done no matter how he feels within. An amateur is an amateur in his attitude emotionally. A professional is a professional in the way he thinks and feels and in his ability to execute under the most trying conditions" – Cus D'Amato*

I have always had an almost neurotic obsession with the sport of boxing. The spectacle of two gladiators going to test their skill, ingenuity and courage against one another in full show of a begging public had me hooked. From Dempsey to Johnson, Marciano to Sugar Ray Robinson (the greatest of them all), each one showed how a man acts in the "most trying of conditions". Never once does the accomplished fighter show any kinks in their armor, in their control and fearlessness. They can take a shot, which would leave the rest of us in a coma, and

NOW PLEASE UNDERSTAND

I DID NOT WRITE THIS ORIGINAL ARTICLE

I ALSO LOVE IT

BUT I'M SHOWING HOW EVEN SOMETHING GOOD CAN BE IMPROVED...



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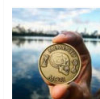
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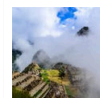
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smile, and continue to go forward to get the better of their opponent. Watch the first Gatti v Ward fight and you will see raw, unabated and pure courage from both fighters giving it everything they've got.

A saying in boxing goes 'styles make fights', in that if you've a skilful, slick moving boxer against a mauler it is interesting to see who will come out on top. Mike Tyson, a student and adopted son of Cus D'Amato was the ultimate punchers fighter, and at his prime he was literally invincible. D'Amato had formed the perfect fighter. Tyson could hit harder, move faster and sent the very fear of death into his opponent even at the stare down.

But this story is incomplete – Tyson had terrible anxiety and fear before fights. In a scene of a documentary about his life, he is at the junior Olympics and standing outside the arena with his coach Teddy Atlas. Tyson is beside himself with fear and self-doubt, crying like a child and getting consoled by Teddy who is trying to prepare his boxer for a fight. Tyson then slowly loosens up his arms by shadow boxing, sniffing up his runny nose and drying his tears he heads into the arena. He wins in eight seconds of the first round by knock-out.

Tyson learned over time how to use the fear, not control it, but *use* it. Cus D'Amato also said of fear, "You must understand fear so you can manipulate it. Fear is like fire. You can make it work for you: it can warm you in winter, cook you're food when you're hungry, give you light when you are in the dark, and produce energy. Let it go out of control and it can hurt you, even kill you... **Fear is a friend of exceptional people**".

Our fears may not *appear* to be that which the boxer feels entering the ring, but the reason they are as real, as difficult to manipulate is because **psychologically, existentially, they are in fact the same**. The boxer is going into the unknown; he's going into a battle that he may very well lose. From the outside it would appear that he doesn't *have* to do it, but the fighter, he knows deep down inside that this is what he *has to do*.

This is the same as we are trying to do every day. We *know* we have great potential, we *know* we have great ideas of how we should live, we *know* that this (short) life we have **demands much more of us than the efforts we are currently making** – but we won't enter the arena. Every excuse we make for being in a bad situation, and not changing it, is simply because of fear. We can say this or that, but I am telling you right now – we can make the time, we can stop watching Netflix, we can stop cheating our days away with frivolous activities – which we pretend are important – and start living a life worthy of true character.

The potential is within, if we would **only allow ourselves to dare peek at it**. The thrill, and dread, involved in tapping that internal reservoir of greatness, and unleashing it onto world, is what life is all about. As **Marcus Aurelius** puts it:

*"Look within. Within is the fountain of good, and it will ever bubble up, if thou wilt ever dig"*

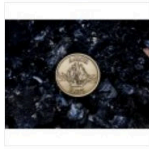
We are no longer just amateurs, feeling our way through life throwing out light punches – it's time to turn professional, it's time to start throwing some heavy leather.

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By **Vincent Kennedy**

Author, ***In the Centre Lies Virtue***

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**Amor Fati**



**Memento Mori  
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**Memento Mori**

